WELCOME TO 2012!

Considering the start we had to 2011, with stormwater flood damage to most of the floor areas of our school, our start to 2012 has been a breeze. I have been so impressed with the way your children have adapted to either returning from a long break at home, or for some students, adjusting to a completely new school as well! This year we have six new Preppies and six older students commencing with us for the first time. Our total population is now 75. I have been principal here for over 6 years and this is the greatest number of enrolments we have had, increasing year by year. We have formed 14 class groupings this year.
Miss Louise’s students had fun during their first week!

STAFFING

On the 8th day of each school year, every state school in Queensland undergoes a census. The number of students enrolled in our school on that day (yesterday) will determine the resource allocation (teaching staff and teacher aide time) for our school for the rest of this year. Our staffing allocation and class groupings, therefore, are subject to change after that date, but hopefully any disruptions will be minimal, but positive.

This year we welcome two new classroom teachers, Yvonne Gordon and Eliza Watt. We also have a new physiotherapist, Georgina Clutterbuck, who will be working with Veronica Case to support students in our school (as well as a large caseload at other schools around the region).

Our front office staff includes Jo Withers (Business Services Manager, Mondays to Thursdays) and Kay Kramer (BSM on Fridays). Mary O’Shea and Sandra Thompson work on a part-time basis as Administrative Assistants.

I will not be working on Fridays again this year. On that day Glenn Gatehouse (our Deputy Principal) is Acting Principal. Glenn’s role as Deputy also includes curriculum co-ordination.

You will get an opportunity to meet your child’s teacher (and meet some of our support staff briefly) during our ‘Meet the Teacher’ Information Evening 22 February at 6.30pm. Our support staff includes:

- Tammy Saxton (School Nurse)
- Veronica Case (Physiotherapist)
- Georgina Clutterbuck – (Physiotherapist)
- Judith Rathmell (Speech-Language Pathologist)
- Cheryl Brown (Occupational Therapist)
- Karen Hegarty ( Guidance Officer replacing Heather Jorgensen who is on leave during Term 1)

On that evening you will be able to spend time with your child’s teacher as you learn more about your child’s program for this year and have an opportunity to ask any questions. We also combine this evening with the AGM of the P&C beforehand. A notice outlining the program for the evening will be going home shortly.

SCHOOL ROUTINES

As it’s our first newsletter for the year and we have new families on board, I’ll take this opportunity to remind parents about a few logistical issues – (apologies to the initiated).

Arrival Time:

School begins at 8.45am each day. Arriving by this time each day ensures that students get off to a positive start as part of the group. Arriving later can disrupt the group and can make it more difficult for children to focus on the activities at hand and then takes more time to settle the group again. Of course this is unavoidable at times, but your co-operation with this matter would be appreciated.

Please be aware that staff are not rostered on duties to supervise students before school until 8.15am so by arriving after this time you can help us to ensure your child’s safety.
Transport:
For those families whose children access bus or taxi transport, I know that the transport companies need to have children dressed and ready for pick-up each morning to avoid delays in getting children to school on time. Correspondingly, parents need to ensure that they are home before drop-off time each afternoon. **If your child is going to be away, it is your responsibility to notify your transport provider.** Please be aware that taxi and bus staff should not be given the responsibility of transporting medication for your child to and from school. Please bring these in yourselves and complete any necessary forms.

Last year, in the interests of safety, we instituted a separate Parent / Carer Pick-Up Gate from the Taxi / Bus Gate. This was to ensure that students did not ‘slip through’ the one gate (which was used for both purposes) while a parent might be talking to the gate staff. As you approach our front gates the Parent / Carer Pick-Up Gate is on your far left and the Taxi / Bus Gate is the main gate.

Emergency Contacts:
Due to the nature of our students, it is necessary to be in phone contact with parents / carers in case of emergency. **Would all parents/ carers please ensure that the school has your latest contact details at all times, especially mobile phones?**

School Lunches:
Meal times are extremely busy times at our school – it’s a case of ‘all hands to the pumps’! For this reason, staff do not have enough time to deal with food which requires significant preparation e.g. microwaving, if this can be avoided. Please try to send in foods which are already prepared and do not require heating.

Also, in an effort to improve student and staff safety, the school eating areas will no longer have sharp knives. It would be appreciated if parents could cut up as much food at home, if this is necessary. Safety is a primary concern and adults are needed for supervising and supporting children.

**Could you please ensure that all lunch equipment is labelled?** This is especially helpful and time-saving for staff members who may not routinely work with your child on a daily basis such as supply staff.

We encourage healthy eating so please try to send in fresh, healthy foods to encourage good eating practices, along with a water bottle. **Water is our preferred drink at school.** Starting this as early as possible will encourage good habits for the future. I realise that there are some students who eat a very narrow range of foods. This can prove to be extremely frustrating for parents (and children). If you would like some assistance with food ideas for your child’s lunches, please ask to speak to our nurse, Tammy Saxton.

School Gates:
As you know, we have a need to key-lock our gates in order to ensure student safety. I am therefore asking parents who arrive late or during the day to call in at the office. Office staff will arrange for a staff member to come to the office to escort them to class or bring them up from class. If you need to enter the gated areas, please pick up a key and return it when finished. Most importantly, please lock the gate behind you when you have entered the main gate and then again when leaving before returning the key. Please lock the gate even if you think you will not be staying for long. I apologise for the inconvenience but the safety of all of our students is paramount.

Our front gates can be a point of congestion, especially in the afternoons during pick up time. Most of the staff are on duty at that time, marshalling students into bus / taxi groups and ensuring that the right students get into the right transport etc. It is advisable to keep conversations with your child’s teacher brief at this time, so that all children’s safety is maintained. This is not meant to stifle communication with staff. By all means make a suitable time with your child’s teacher to discuss any issues with them at length.

Student Resource Scheme:
Jo at the front office will be sending out notices explaining the Student Resource Scheme in the next couple of weeks. In the meantime, please don’t worry about making any payments until you receive this notice.

Spare Clothes:
All parents are urged to send in a spare change of clothes for your child (more, depending on your child’s needs). Irrespective of the toileting needs of children, accidents happen. They may include spilled drinks etc. **Please ensure that all of your child’s personal clothing and any personal belongings are clearly labelled.**

If you have clothes at home from last year’s school supply, please return them. We need them for future emergencies. If you have any old clothes (not necessarily uniforms) which your children have outgrown, we would appreciate such a donation to our spare clothing pool for emergencies.
Visits to Paediatricians:
We are aware that children regularly visit their paediatrician. If your child has a paediatric appointment coming up, please let your child’s teacher know. This will enable us to provide a report about your child’s progress at school. Paediatricians tell us that they find information from school to be very valuable e.g. in relation to a child’s behaviour, ability to concentrate, cognitive and physical skills, energy levels etc. while at school. It would be desirable to have at least one week’s notice for a report, if possible.

DATE CLAIMER
The Toowoomba West P&C Association would like to officially notify members and new families that the AGM will be held on 22 February commencing 6.30 pm sharp.
This will be followed by the Parent / Teacher Information Evening.

Lorena Liebke
Secretary
P&C Association

STUDENT-FREE DAY FOR 2012
Student-free day for this year will be on the third Monday of Term 4, Monday 22 October 2011

Queensland state school term dates are available from the Department of Education and Training’s website at: www.education.qld.gov.au/public_media/calendar/holidays.html

Till next time,

Lea

The following message comes from Education Queensland:

ACCIDENT INSURANCE COVER FOR STUDENTS
Some school activities and physical education, particularly contact sports, carry inherent risks of injury.

Parents are advised that the Department of Education and Training does not have Student Accident Insurance cover for students. Therefore, if your child is injured at school as a result of an accident or incident, all costs associated with the injury, including medical costs, are the responsibilities of the child, parent or caregiver. Some incidental medical costs may be covered by Medicare. If parents have private health insurance, some costs may also be covered through the private health insurance. Any other costs would be borne by the parents.

Student Accident Insurance is an insurance policy that pays certain benefits in certain circumstances should your child have an accident. It is a personal decision for parents as to the types and levels of private insurance they arrange to cover their child for any accidental injury that may occur. Parents should contact their insurer or an approved Australian insurance broker if they choose to take out student personal accident insurance cover for their child.

UNIFORMS!
Our Uniform Convenor, Debbie Ritchie has asked me to tell you that if student uniform orders are lodged during the week, she will come in to fill those orders on Fridays. (P&C EFTPOS is not available at the moment unfortunately, so please place orders with cash or cheque.)

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Coming Events
3 February 2011